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Licking County launches Operation Feed Campaign with opening of new FPN Market

To kick off 2024's Operation Feed campaign, the Food Pantry Network of Licking County hosted more than 100 supporters and community members, to tour the newly designed FPN Market. A new program added to the Food Pantry Network of Licking County earlier this year, the FPN Market offers a grocery store-style experience offering extended hours, independent shopping, and weekly visits to make food more accessible in Licking County.

Alyssa Shepherd, Development Director of the Food Pantry Network of Licking County began the presentation by acknowledging the supporters of the newly renovated space on Brice Street. MidOhio Food Collective, Shane Williams with SW Paint LLC, and Sherwin Williams were among the organizations who were recognized at the event for their contributions. Additionally, the Food Pantry Network of Licking County utilized interest from their endowment fund to purchase new freezers and refrigeration units for the FPN Market. Shepherd stated, "The volunteers and staff rallied around the vision of the new market and created a warm and welcoming environment. We are so lucky to have the support of the Licking County community." Shepherd introduced Rob Montagnese, Licking Memorial Health Systems President & CEO as the 2024 Operation Feed Chairperson. Montagnese shared plans to collaborate between the Food Pantry Network of Licking County and Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) to open a second FPN Market in the spring. The FPN Market in partnership with LMH will be open about 30 hours per week.

Chuck Moore, Executive Director of the Food Pantry Network of Licking County, was the last to address the crowd. "Times are getting tough for people and we want to be sure they feel secure that food is here for them, that's what access to food is, making food available to people when they need it," said Moore.

The FPN Market on Brice Street is currently serving 700 families a week. Additionally, the Network is made up of 18 pantries, 6 pop up produce distributions, a daily meal program at ~~the~~ The Salvation Army, a baby pantry and other meal and snack programs throughout the county. Last year, the Network served 63,000 households and distributed 4.25 million pounds of food.

Food Pantry Network of Licking County's Operation Feed fundraising campaign will run from March 1- March 31. For more information about Operation Feed or finding food assistance visit on their website at www.foodpantrynetwork.net or call 740-344-7401.

Photo Caption: Rob Montagnese, 2024 Operation Feed Chairperson addresses the crowd.